

Report
1st Meeting
with Thieu

T O P S E C R E T S E N S I T I V E 191515Z DEC 72 VIA CAS CHANNELS (BUNKER)
FROM GENERAL HAIG SAIGON #0302
TO EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY DR. HENRY A. KISSINGER IMMEDIATE
HAIG TO 05

FOLLOWING THREE HOUR MEETING WITH THIEU THIS MORNING, I HAD
A TWO AND A HALF HOUR MEETING WITH PRESIDENT LON NOL. THE MEETING
WITH LON NOL WAS ESPECIALLY SATISFACTORY. HE AGAIN EXPRESSED FULL
SUPPORT FOR THE AGREEMENT, CLAIMED THAT WHETHER OR NOT HANOI MEETS
OUR DEMANDS, THE VERY FACT THAT IT SOUGHT TO NEGOTIATE CONSTITUTES
A MAJOR SETBACK AND DEFEAT. HE POINTED OUT THAT PRESIDENT NIXON
HAS OBVIOUSLY WON 99 PERCENT OF THE STRUGGLE AND EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE
THAT HANOI WOULD SETTLE IF WE MAINTAINED PRESSURE AGAINST THE NORTH.

LON NOL STATED THAT HE FELT THAT THE CURRENT PROVISIONS OF THE
AGREEMENT WERE MORE THAN SATISFACTORY AND EXPRESSED PUZZLEMENT
AT THIEU'S ATTITUDE SINCE THE GVN NOW HAD THE FOURTH LARGEST ARMY
IN THE WORLD AND IT WAS INCONCEIVABLE THAT IT COULD NOT COPE WITH A
DECISIVELY DEFEATED ENEMY FORCE. I EXPLAINED TO LON NOL THE CURRENT
GENERAL STATUS OF THE AGREEMENT AND THE DETAILS OF OUR AIR OPERATIONS
AGAINST THE NORTH. HE WAS DELIGHTED WITH BOTH. LON NOL ALSO STATED
THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT HANOI'S STRATEGY AND MAIN LINE OF SUPPORT

ARMY review(s) completed.

State Dept. review completed

MORI C03318061

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS
APPLY

HAIG TO
05

STEMMED LARGELY FROM MOSCOW. HIS LINES TO PEKING SERVE TO CONFIRM THE VALIDITY OF THIS THESIS.

THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA APPEARS TO HAVE STABILIZED SUBSTANTIALLY. ALL OF ITS MAIN ARTERIES ARE OPEN EXCEPT ROUTE 1 AND LON NOL IS ON THE OFFENSIVE ALL ALONG THE LOC'S. AMBASSADOR SWANK INFORMED ME THAT HE HELD INTELLIGENCE WHICH SUGGESTED THAT THE KMER ROUGE WAS LARGELY DISAFFECTED FROM SIHANOUK AND THAT SOME TENTATIVE FEELERS HAD ALREADY BEEN PUT OUT BETWEEN LON NOL'S GOVERNMENT AND THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNISTS. LON NOL SEEMS CONFIDENT THAT IF NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS ARE ONCE WITHDRAWN FROM CAMBODIA A RAPID SETTLEMENT CAN BE ARRIVED AT, PROVIDING SIHANOUK IS NOT IN THE MIX.

LON NOL REMAINS A DREAMER. I AM NOT SURE HOW LONG HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD SURVIVE IF NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS, CURRENTLY LIMITED TO A TOTAL OF ABOUT 5,000, EVER RETURNED TO CAMBODIA FROM SOUTH VIETNAM. NEVERTHELESS, HE IS TOTALLY ON BOARD FOR THE AGREEMENT, HE IS PHYSICALLY BETTER THAN I HAVE EVER SEEN HIM AND SEEMS CONFIDENT ABOUT THE FUTURE. I TOLD HIM THAT THIS WAS PROBABLY MY LAST VISIT TO PHNOM PENH IN MY PRESENT CAPACITY AND HE EXPRESSED GREAT REGRET, NOTING THAT WE HAD BOTH MAINTAINED SIMILAR VIEWS ON THE POLITICAL MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

DUE TO THE HOUR HERE AND TOMORROW'S HECTIC SCHEDULE, I WILL NOT REPORT FURTHER ON MY LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS WITH THIEU THIS MORNING EXCEPT TO EMPHASIZE THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME I LEFT THESE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT THIEU WILL DEFINITELY GO ALONG IF WE ARRIVE AT AN AGREEMENT CONTAINING THE MINIMUM ADDITIONAL CHANGES YOU AND I HAVE DISCUSSED. THE PRINCIPLE FACTORS APPEAR TO BE ACCEPTABLE DMZ LANGUAGE AND SOME PROVISION FOR SIGNATURE BY WHICH THIEU DOES NOT HAVE TO AFFIX HIS SIGNATURE TO A DOCUMENT WHICH MENTIONS THE PRG.

FOLLOWING MY MEETING WITH THIEU, HE CONVENED THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, TOGETHER WITH THE PRESIDENTS OF THE TWO HOUSES. THE MEETING APPARENTLY LASTED ALL AFTERNOON AND WELL INTO THE EVENING. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THIEU IS BADLY SHAKEN AND KNOWS THAT HE MUST ARRIVE WITH A DECISION BEFORE I RETURN ON THURSDAY. I AM STILL NOT CONFIDENT THAT HE CAN BRING HIMSELF AROUND TO DO SO BUT I AM EQUALLY CONFIDENT THAT IF WE HAVE AN AGREEMENT AND FACE HIM WITH THE FINAL CHOICE HE WILL GO ALONG. I MAY SING A DIFFERENT TUNE AFTER TOMORROW'S SESSION BUT NEVERTHELESS FEEL THAT GREAT PROGRESS WAS MADE TODAY. THE EXCHANGE BETWEEN US WAS BLUNT WITH NO HOLDS BARRED, WITH THIEU OBVIOUSLY FEARFUL OF SAYING ANYTHING TO ME

WHICH EVEN SMACKED OF HIS REFUSAL TO GO ALONG. I AM FULLY CONFIDENT THAT HE IS TOTALLY AWARE THAT HE HAS NOWHERE ELSE TO GO AND I AM ALSO CONFIDENT THAT HE BELIEVES IN HIS OWN HEART THAT HE CAN COPE ADEQUATELY WITH THE SITUATION THAT HE WILL BE POSED WITH IN A POST-SETTLEMENT ENVIRONMENT HERE.

WARM REGARDS.